

rest of us are forgotten. And that, I would argue, is exactly the way things are supposed to be.●

A HEROIC GIFT OF LIFE

● Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today to inform my colleagues of a recent act of great charity by one of my constituents, Ms. Debbie Laakso of Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

In an astonishing act of kindness, the single mother of four donated a kidney to her friend and former boss, Verle Jucht. The odd twist is that Debbie and Verle met at John Morrell and Company where Verle was Debbie's supervisor. Though they separated as colleagues in 1993, they surprisingly remained friends for the last six years. When Verle's kidney began to fail last year, Debbie gave him hers. Knowing her jovial nature, Verle and his wife, Colleen, thought their old friend was kidding when she first offered to donate.

Luckily, Debbie and Verle were a match, and after surgery last November, both are doing well. This story, Mr. President, is a great testament to the truly good and giving nature of people. I rise today to thank Debbie Laakso for her good nature and good humor and to congratulate her and Verle Jucht on their bravery and courage. Debbie serves as a model of goodness and friendship for all Americans, and their story is an account for all of the importance of the "Gift of Life."●

RELEASE OF SONG YONGYI

● Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I rise today to celebrate the safe return of Song Yongyi to his home and family in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Mr. Song, Librarian at Dickinson College, was recently freed from a Chinese detention center after a detainment of 172 days.

Mr. Song was born on December 15, 1949 in Shanghai where he attended elementary and middle school. During the Chinese Cultural Revolution, his education was interrupted and Mr. Song became a dockworker. In 1971 he was detained and labeled a "counter-revolutionary" for organizing a book club with four other young people interested in discussing political ideas. Mr. Song spent five years in detention under harsh conditions, where he was severely beaten, resulting in permanent damage to his health. After the Cultural Revolution, he was completely exonerated of all criminal charges.

In 1977 Mr. Song was part of an elite group of students who entered university as a result of a competitive, nationwide examination. He graduated from Shanghai Normal University in 1981. He taught Chinese literature for Shanghai educational television until 1987, at which time he became a full-time literary critic and widely recog-

nized researcher. Mr. Song moved to the United States in 1989 and enrolled in graduate school at the University of Colorado, where his wife Helen (Xiaohua) and daughter Michelle (Xiaoxiao) joined him in 1990. After obtaining a second masters degree in library information science from Indiana University, the Song family moved to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where Song Yongyi is employed as Librarian at Dickinson College.

Mr. Song's deep interest in the 1966-1976 Cultural Revolution and growing prominence as an expert in the field led him to make research trips to China in the summers of 1998 and 1999. As part of his research, Mr. Song collected documents concerning the Cultural Revolution, which are widely available in markets and curio shops. It was during this most recent visit to China that state security officials detained Mr. and Mrs. Song in Beijing on August 7. For about one month, Yongyi and Helen were held in a detention center in Beijing and interrogated. They were not allowed to see each other or communicate with the outside world. Later they were moved to a facility where conditions were less harsh and were finally permitted to speak with each other. Helen was released from custody on November 16 and allowed to return home to Carlisle, but Yongyi remained in detention. On December 24, Song Yongyi was arrested and charged with the "purchase and illegal provision of intelligence to foreign people."

Mr. Song's arrest generated an outpouring of support from scholars in the United States and abroad, as well as from politicians. As of result of the vigorous campaign to secure Mr. Song's release, the Chinese government announced their decision to free Song Yongyi.

On behalf of the many Pennsylvanians who diligently kept the Song family in their thoughts and prayers, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations and warmest wishes on the safe return of Song Yongyi.●

HATS OFF TO THE ALL-STAR RESEARCH TEAM AT NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

● Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, well over a decade ago, plant pathologists at North Dakota State University's Agricultural Experiment Station observed signs of a plant disease called Fusarium Head Blight—more commonly known as scab—in a few of the region's wheat fields. Upon this discovery, the researchers swung into action, not knowing they were about to do battle with an insidious plant disease which would eventually devastate wheat fields across the Northern Plains during the 1990s. Since 1993, scab has been an ever present scourge. Losses to the region's farmers from this cereal crop disease have been estimated to be

as high as \$2.6 billion during the last decade, the most costly plant disease outbreak ever in the United States.

Earlier this month, though, some good news was delivered on this front by those researchers who have battled this disease for so long. The North Dakota State University Agricultural Experiment Station announced the release of a new scab resistant spring wheat variety named Alsen. The new variety is named after the town of Alsen, located on route 66 in Northeastern North Dakota, an area which was particularly hard hit by this disease.

The researchers say that while this variety is not immune to scab, it can fight off the disease. This is excellent progress and welcome news. And, while this is the first spring wheat variety to exhibit scab resistance, it certainly won't be the last.

My hat is off to these researchers from North Dakota State University! There are many long, tedious, and unglamorous hours involved in cross-breeding wheat plants. The farmers of the region will be served well by this research, and it is proper and fitting that we recognize the dedicated efforts of those who have contributed their life's work to combat this disease which threatens the livelihood of our producers.

On behalf of all who are involved with, or impacted by, the agricultural economy of the Northern Plains—which includes just about everyone living in the region—I am proud to be able to take this opportunity to say thank you for a job well done to the researchers and support staff of the North Dakota State University Agricultural Experiment Station.●

TRIBUTE TO BARBARA BUSCH

● Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to an American who has given graciously and unselfishly to her country. For over 36 years, Barbara Busch served this nation with great distinction in her many different capacities at the U.S. Peace Corps: from a staff assistant when she first began in 1964, to Executive Officer of the Recruitment and Communications Division, to Chief of Operations of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, to Acting Director of the Peace Corps. It is truly a story of hard work and dedication.

Barbara retired from public service just under one month ago. Mr. President, I wanted to take this opportunity to congratulate her for a remarkable career and wish her well as she moves on to the next stage of her life. She leaves the Peace Corps with a better understanding of its importance and its role in the world than anyone that comes to mind. She will be greatly missed.

When I had the privilege to serve as Peace Corps Director, Barbara was